

DOES ANYONE EVER LEARN ANYTHING?

when he calls his mother on easter sunday
she wants to know what his kids received
from the easter bunny.

he relates a few things, such as the ant
farm that they're crazy about, and she
says, "you mean they didn't get any candy?"

he gazes about the apartment, which could
easily double for a see's shop, or a
fanny farmer's. "they got plenty
of candy," he says. "probably too much."

"oh now," she says, "children have to
have some candy on easter."

he is tempted to say, why? so they can
grow up with blood sugar problems like
yours, or die at fifty of diabetes,
like my father did?

but instead he says, "i've never noticed
any shortage of sweets around here."

"well, children deserve a little treat
on the holidays," she says.

he changes the subject, but eventually
she gets around to, "i certainly wish
you could be here with me today."

"oh well," he says. "oh well."

I WAS BORN BEFORE HOMOGENIZED MILK

you used to have to go to paris
for a scotch and perrier.
i used to look forward to a
tucson trip for green corn tamales.

people flew to madrid for roast
suckling pig at botin's and even
to london for, at simpson's on
the strand, roast beef and yorkshire
pudding.

everyone agreed that guinness did not
travel well, not even to london,
and lowenbrau had not become
azusabrau.

people used to save for years to
give their kids that once-in-a-
lifetime trip to disneyland. old
men, like mooses, refused to die
until their eyes had discerned the
unique configurations of fenway,
wrigley, or the house that ruth built.

now you can probably see more african
wildlife in san diego than africa

you don't even have to drive to westwood
for a first-run movie.

and the croissant and the quiche?
isn't there some way to deport them
and renew their romance?

can you imagine bothering to smuggle
back a dirty book from denmark?

i heard a guy order pernod in the reno room.

today, wherever you are, you are everywhere,
yet no place special.

LIKE SLEEPING ON A GYMNASIUM FLOOR ON AN ISLAND IN A TYPHOON

when my wife refers to anything
as "an adventure," my children
blanch, because, from past
experience, "adventure" has become
synonymous with "ordeal."

THERE ARE MORE WHERE THAT ONE CAME FROM

i am reading good morning, midnight, by
jean rhys, when a moth alights on
the table, just to the right of
the book.

i think of moths in history and
literature, the gypsy moth, for
instance, the moth and the flame,
virginia woolf, emily dickinson,
sylvia plath, ann sexton ...

I smash the moth.

i return to the novel pleased
to have discovered that i have
retained one of my few physical
gifts: fast hands.